



# The Valley Scribe

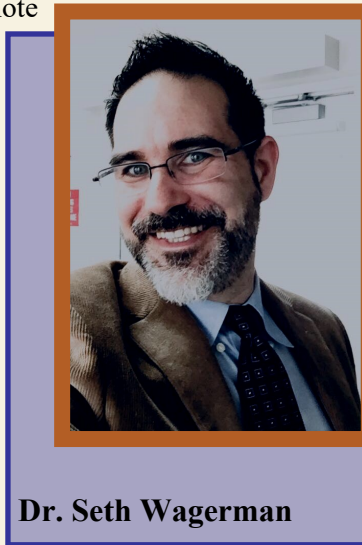
Newsletter of the San Fernando Valley Branch of the California Writers Club

## Using Psychology to Master Character Development

**T**he San Fernando Valley Branch of the California Writers Club is honored to welcome keynote speaker Dr. Seth Wagerman on Saturday, October 2 at 1:00 pm via Zoom with a topic titled “Using Psychology to Master Character Development.”

For those of us who attend skill-building workshops, we know that typical exercises in character development involve the author digging into his/her/their characters’ backgrounds and personalities with detailed worksheets. But our speaker will take us in a new and innovative direction.

Dr. Wagerman says, “Why fill out lengthy, trivial character sheets when you can build a resonant character using real psychology – by understanding modern assessment tools and research?” Thus, Wagerman will discuss personality development from impactful childhood events to the residue characters leave behind in their own environment.



**Dr. Seth Wagerman**

According to the Rose City Center in Pasadena (<https://www.rosecitycenter.org/>), where he works as a registered psychological assistant, “Dr. Wagerman received his Ph.D. and M.A. in Psychology from the University of California, Riverside, specializing in personality theory, social dynamics, and research methodology. He has published several articles and book chapters on these topics and presented his findings at national and international conferences.”

Along with teaching university level psychology courses, Dr. Wagerman has been a speaker at the Southern California Writers Conference and at the Orange County Branch of the California Writers Club.

*Note: Members of CWC-SFV will receive a Zoom invitation via email. Members of other CWC branches may request a free Zoom invitation by contacting Monte Swann, VP/Zoom host by 6:00 pm on October 1 at [cwcsfhost@gmail.com](mailto:cwcsfhost@gmail.com). Visitors may purchase admission to this lecture or learn about membership at [www.cwc-sfv.org](http://www.cwc-sfv.org)*

—Karen Gorback, Ph.D.



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# Karen's Corner

By Karen Gorback, CWC-SFV President



Welcome to October – a month filled with dozens of special recognition days, including National Taco Day (October 4), World Teachers’ Day (October 5), and of course, Halloween on October 31. But this year, I’d also like to call your attention to a little-known day recognized each year on October 1—the International Day of Older Persons, established by the United Nations General Assembly on December 14th, 1990.

The intent of this day is to set aside time to recognize both the contributions and issues facing individuals around the world as we all grow older.

As many of you know, I enjoy writing in many genres from novels, poetry, and children’s books, to memoirs and

political proposals. Each has unique joys and challenges. Last spring, while researching a legislative proposal for the California Senior Legislature, I wrote an op-ed piece with the header “It is Time to Kick Ageism to the Curb.” published in the Ventura County Star. Thus, in recognition of the International Day of Older Persons, and with permission from the Star, I want to share this article with you today and encourage you to address issues about which you are passionate by submitting your own op-ed articles to your local newspapers. This is what I call “prose with a purpose.”

—Karen Goreback, Ph.D.

## It is Time to Kick Ageism to the Curb

First published in *The Ventura County Star*

By Karen Gorback. CWC-SFV President, Ph. D.

Thank you to the Thousand Oaks City Council for putting “inclusion” at the top of its list of goals for the 2021-22 fiscal year. I’m proud of the council for taking this position and honoring diversity at all stages of life. Unfortunately, even as my hometown raises its voice for inclusion, the insidious practice of ageism lives on.

A recent headline in ForeignPolicy.com (Feb. 11, 2021) caught my eye: “How the Pandemic Made the ‘Last Acceptable Prejudice Worse.’” Although we are more than a half-century beyond the passage of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, ageism continues to contaminate the labor market, well docu-



mented by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and AARP.

“During the first six months of the COVID-19 pandemic, workers age 55 and older were 17 percent

more likely to lose their jobs than employees who were just a few years younger,” according to the AARP. Research further indicates that older workers regain employment far more slowly than their younger counterparts.

In her groundbreaking book, *This Chair Rocks – A Manifesto Against Ageism*, author Ashton Applewhite explains the origin of the term. “When geriatric

(Continued on page 3)

cian Robert Butler coined the phrase ‘ageism’ in 1969 — not long after ‘sexism’ made its debut — he defined it as a combination of prejudicial attitudes toward older people, old age, and aging itself; discriminatory practices against older; and institutional practices and policies that perpetuate stereotypes about them.”

Ageism is deeply ingrained in our language and institutions, and we have been negligent in not calling it out. Examples abound:

- We commonly use the phrase “silver tsunami,” despite the comparison of an older adult demographic to a natural disaster.
- We publish lists of “40 under 40,” with the unintended consequence of digging ourselves deeper into our youth-obsessed culture.
- We work in offices seeking to recruit “digital natives,” despite research indicating that a diverse workforce generates better outcomes.
- We support businesses that are supposed to protect loved ones with long term care, without insisting on appropriate oversight and accountability. The pandemic shoved this one right into our faces.

The list goes on. But we cannot begin to correct the problem until we accept our own culpability and commit to doing the hard work to eliminate it. In January, California took that step with the release of the Master Plan for Aging (MPA). The MPA is the culmination of an 18-month study by the California Health and Human Services Agency, coordinating with the California Department on Aging (CDA).

The MPA, itself, is an exceptional example of inclusion, soliciting input from the public and private sectors, as well as from philanthropic organizations and ordinary folks who wanted to contribute.

The goal of the MPA is to build a “California for All Ages” by 2030. The MPA website contains the document, short-and long-term goals, action plans, a playbook for local governments, and a data dashboard to track progress. California’s Master Plan for Aging sets the stage for other states to follow.

Finally, the pandemic has painfully demonstrated that viruses—both biological and cultural—care nothing for geographic borders. On March 18, the World Health Organization, the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Population Fund, released “A Global Report on Ageism,” calling for “urgent action to combat ageism and better measurement and reporting to expose ageism for what it is—an insidious scourge on our society.”

The report is a call to action with three recommendations: 1) Invest in evidence-based strategies to prevent and tackle ageism. 2) Improve data and research to gain a better understanding of ageism and how to reduce it. 3) Build a movement to change the narrative around age and aging.

I’m looking toward the day when stories about ageism will be found only in historical documents, instead of flashing across my daily news feed. But we need to be vigilant. We need to call out ageism when it occurs. We must hold our elected officials, as well as all community leaders and ourselves, accountable for implementing the priorities and plans to embrace inclusion and kick ageism to the curb.

***CWC-SFV President Karen Gorback, Ph.D., serves as the Vice Chair of the Advisory Council for the Ventura County Area Agency on Aging.***

# Carol Tice Works For The Best Boss Ever: Carol Tice!

By Kathy Highcove



After working at on company projects at home during the COVID emergency, a home office is hard to relinquish for many writers. Many office workers begin to think about working from home as a permanent arrangement. A freelance writer set-up, can sound like an ideal situation — hand-picked clients, flexible work hours and more time for family and domestic duties. No more frustrating bouts with unreasonable bosses and unrealistic deadlines! Freedom to choose jobs and projects that best fits one's skill set. Free to be me!

But our September speaker, Carol Tice, immediately pricked that bright balloon: "Freelance writing is a not a fun hobby; it's a time-intensive business!" she firmly stated and then told us how she started her freelance writer business and learned the real deal. Twenty years ago, Carol was the mother of two small children and realized she could no longer commit to a nine-to-five regimen, However, her family badly needed a second income. What to do? She took stock of past employment experiences, her education, her own writing acumen and decided to become a freelance writer who worked from home.

Carol was confident of her writing abilities, but she would have to find her own customers, make persuasive sales pitches and be able to deliver the "product" on time. The more she researched freelancer market, the more she realized that free lancing would not be stimulating bouts of free-wheeling creative writing. Freelance work would be **hard work**. And instead of one or two clients at a time to please, she would have a rotating list of clients every week, every month. And many deadlines. But Carol learned the freelance system and twenty years later, she's still her own boss and hosts a thriving freelance career and website.

Carol's talk made clear that freelance clients expect results, just like any employer expects results. Clients seek out freelancers who will best deliver a satisfactory product. All freelancers must serve many clients. When one

job nears completion, a freelancer must immediately look for the next client, and then work up the right pitch to cinch the sale. Obviously, the freelancer's Circle of Commerce is a never-ending story.

More advice from Carol: If you plan to work at home, don't rush out to IKEA to buy new office furniture. First, make a plan! Be businesslike—do the research and the math and figure out how to market your writing, attract clients, make proposals and earn an adequate income. There are all types of writing jobs and all types of pitches for every mainstream and niche publication. Carol told us, "Do your homework and find freelance work that best suits your abilities and acumen."

Most importantly:

- ◆ Before your pitch, read all the company's directions, needs, and freelancers' requirements for the assignment.
- ◆ Don't work without a contract, If your employer won't make one, write the contract yourself.
- ◆ Make sure you're paid on the acceptance of your work and not upon publication at a later date.


By the end of our speaker's presentation, Carol's listeners definitely had a much more realistic image of freelance work. But we were also reminded that a freelancer doesn't have to be a hermit. It's good for you and your business to meet online with other freelancer writers.

Remember, if you have a yen for freelancing, there are innumerable support groups and professional organizations that assist freelance writers. Whatever you need to know is out there, freely available on the Internet. It's up to you to make your freelance dream come true.

**For more info, check out Carol Tice's Freelance Websites:**

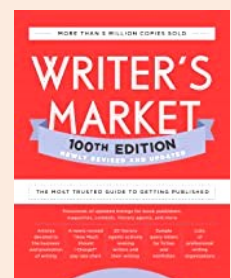
Blog & E-Books: <https://www.makealivingwriting.com>

Courses & Community: <https://freelancewritersden.com>



**But don't forget this excellent resource for writers that provides essential information on today's marketing scene:**

**2021 *Writer's Market***





**G**host writing is all the work and none of the glory. It's the greatest book you've written that you can't get credit for. So why is this such a thriving market? Money and convenience. Aspiring writers often need to keep their day job. Ghost writing allows a writer to do his work from home and on a flexible schedule, while leaving time for their own writing. And while ghost writers are usually not listed on the books they write, or by word-of-mouth, especially when the books published are successful, ensures constant stream of growing income (just until your own book becomes a mega success, that is).

Starting on a path to become a ghostwriter can be a daunting task, but luckily there are plenty of resources available, like [Freelance Writing](#) website's "4 Tips to Improve Your Ghost Writing Career" and [Christine Cube](#) "So you want to be a ghostwriter. Here's what you need to know."

If you decided ghost writing is for you, there are some ground rules you must adhere to:

### *Discretion is the name of the game*

Your clients rely on your ability to remain silent. In an age where everyone displays their entire life on social media, this may be a challenge to some. You can't brag about a book you wrote for someone has been on the New York Times bestseller list for weeks, and you can't advertise your list of clients, no matter how big they are. Ghost writer, [John Peragine](#) knows this can pose a problem when seeking new clients. He suggests asking your customers if they would agree to serve as references. However, he cautions to let your client know in advance they'll be contacted for a reference.

### *It's not me, It's you*

This is not your book, it's your client's book. You are not the co-author. In his blog "How I Ghostwrite Other Authors' Books, writer [Joe Bunting](#) details the differences between a ghostwriter and a co-author. You may have great ideas, and your clients may like them, but if they don't, you need to be the kind of person who can put their own ego aside and follow their clients' vision. British ghostwriter, [Roz Morris](#) suggests you "abandon your identity." She compares ghostwriters to actors: Both need to be able to "adopt the voice and mind of another person. That's part of the appeal as well as the challenge."



### *Let's talk*

Good ghostwriters must do more than master the art of writing and familiarity with the different writing genres. They have to acquire research skills and perfect their interviewing capabilities. Getting into your clients' head means you should learn as much as possible about them, even if you are hired to write a fiction book and not a biography. It is advisable to invest in a good recording device. There are plenty of portable electronic gadgets, or, if due to COVID19 a face-to-face meeting is impossible and the interview is done over a meeting app, be sure to use the recording option. Always notify your client they are being recorded and make notation in the contract referencing the recording, and informing the clients what will be done with them once the assignment is completed.

If you ever watched an episode of "House," you'd know the grumpy doctor never takes his patients' word, because they all lie. It doesn't mean your client does, but as a ghost writer you should do your own research as well, especially when it comes to fact checking. For more advice on this subject, head to [Emma Brudner](#)'s blog "Ghostwriting 101: Tips from Bloggers Who've Done It."

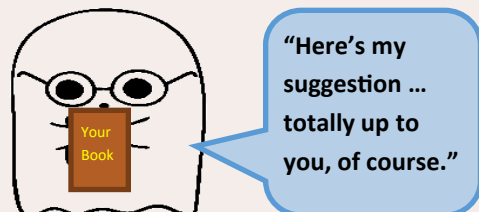
### *Flexible – yes, Whenever – no*

Ghostwriting is certainly one of those professions you can do from home. But while there is flexibility when it comes to your work hours, it is important to specify and respect time frames and deadlines, just make them realistic. Your client's time and yours are important, and just like customers may have a date in mind when each phase of the book is to be finished by, you should also ensure a project fits into your plans. Specify in the contract not just when each part is to be delivered to the client, but also how long client has to respond with corrections and rewrites request. How many rounds of comments will be done for the initial amount of money agreed on, and how much each additional round of rewrites will cost. Detail what happens if your client does not respond in time, as their delay may impact your own plans for a vacation or other writing assignments. Writer, [Yo Prinzel](#) provides a few good pointers in his article "Five Essential Tips for Ghostwriters."

### *Remember your ABC's*

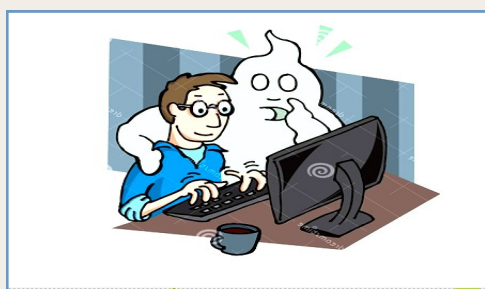
Always Be Crafting. Writing for others comes with the danger of losing your own voice. Find a way to separate your own writing from what you write for others. Some ghostwriters concentrate on one genre for clients while writing their own book in another. Some schedule a "rest" time between projects, and some set certain hours during the day to ghostwrite and to their personal writing.

(Continued on page 6)



Now that you have the why and the must, it's time to turn to the how. Ghost writing is not for the faint of heart. There is a lot of competition and ... well, it's ghostwriting, so you never know who you are up against. And while your clients can be agents, publishers and private people, you won't get hired until you get your name out there. Networking and advertising are keys to success, but please make sure you have plenty of writing samples (preferably published) to serve as your business card. For a step by step guide, check out [Elna Cain's](#) blog "How to Become a Ghostwriter for Beginners (Ghostwriting Step-by-Step)," and for more information about finding work in the field, consult the [Master Class Staff](#) article "How to Become a Ghostwriter: 5 Steps for Finding Ghostwriting Work."

And may the ghost of writers past be with you.



#### Helpful Hyperlinks:

Freelance Writing:

Christine Cube: <https://mediablog.prnewswire.com/2017/10/05/ghost-writing-tips/>

John Peragine: <https://writersinthestormblog.com/2017/05/10-strategies-of-successful-ghostwriters/>

Joe Bunting: <https://thewritepractice.com/ghostwrite/>

Roz Morris: <https://selfpublishingadvice.org/writing-how-to-be-a-ghostwriter/>

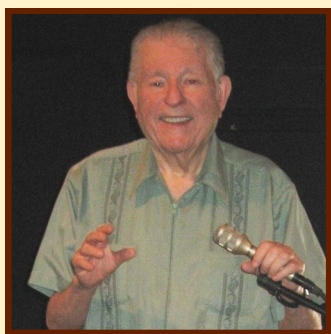
Emma Brudner: <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/ghostwriting-tips>

Yo Prinzel: <https://allfreelancewriting.com/five-essential-tips-ghostwriters/>

Elna Cain <https://elnacain.com/blog/ghostwriter/>

Master Class Staff: <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-become-a-ghostwriter#what-is-a-ghostwriter>

## Norman Molesko Receives An Honor From The ONEgeneration Senior Enrichment Center



**O**n August 24, 2021, CWC-SFV member Norman Molesko became the new Resident Poet for the ONEgeneration Senior Enrichment Center in Reseda, California. Norman will contribute a poem to the ONEgeneration newsletter every month. Here's a quote from the organization's monthly newsletter that introduced the new Resident Poet to their membership:

*Norman Molesko is a poet, author, public speaker, former licensed psychologist, former licensed nursing home administrator, and a current Ambassador for Seniors.*

*Some of Norman's distinction include being the Resident Poet at the Valley Voice Newsletter, Poet Laureate of the California Retired Teachers Association San Fernando Valley, and Senior Advocacy Partner with the Los Angeles Poet Society. Norman is also referred to as, "LA's Young Oldie" Senior Poet, by the Los Angeles Poet Society. At age 91, Norman refuses to "be put out to pasture" and has become an advocate for positive creative aging. He uses his poetry to communicate with others about senior issues, concerns and experiences. Norman aims to reach out to readers through his work with the objective of combating loneliness and isolation in the senior community. In his own words: "Touching a human soul in a positive and enriching way is what I am about."*

**Congratulations to Norman Molesko, who has made many creative contributions to *The Valley Scribe*.**

—Kathy Highcove, *The Valley Scribe* Editor



SAN FERNANDO

# Valley Writers

A BRANCH OF THE CALIFORNIA WRITERS CLUB



Whether you have been published or have always wanted to write, please join the San Fernando Valley branch of the California Writers Club for monthly Zoom meetings to learn more about the craft and business of writing. This series is free for members from any branch of the California Writers Club. Please visit [cwc-sfv.org](http://cwc-sfv.org) for membership information or single-lecture admission.

## CWC-SFV SPEAKERS FOR 2021-2022

**AUGUST 8, 2021**

Silver Rose

**“If You Don’t Ask, the Answer is No.”**

Join us to welcome "Happiness Coach" Silver Rose for a motivational boost and a lot of smiles to kick off the program year!

**SEPTEMBER 12, 2021 (SUNDAY)**

Carol Tice

**“Writing for Magazines & Other Freelance Opportunities”**

If you've always dreamed of a magazine by-line, join freelance writing expert Carol Tice to learn how.

**OCTOBER 2, 2021**

Dr. Seth Wagerman

**“Using Psychology to Master Character Development”**

Why fill out lengthy character sheets when you can build a resonant character using real psychology? You don't want to miss this.

**NOVEMBER 6, 2021**

Cary Ginell

**“Biographical Writing: From Proposal to Publishing”**

Ever think about writing a biography but don't know how to begin or where to publish? Help is here!

**DECEMBER 4, 2021**

Barri Evins

**“Can You Hear Me Now? Developing the Writer's Voice”**

Writers with a *voice* have a distinctive style, setting the pros apart from the rest. Attend this lecture and find your unique professional voice.

**JANUARY 8, 2022**

Jill Lublin

**Get Known Everywhere: Publicity Strategies for Authors**

If the PR part of writing gives you nightmares, join Jill for a wake-up call. We need this!

**FEBRUARY 5, 2022**

Kendall Jones, JD

**“Self Publishing Contracts and Pitfalls”**

Learn to look beyond the hype and promises of self-publishing with this not-to-be missed presentation.

**MARCH 5, 2022**

Jonathan Maberry

**“The Genre of You”**

If your muse beckons you to multiple genres but you're afraid to follow, don't be. Join Jonathan to learn why.

**APRIL 2, 2022**

Lynne Thompson, Poet Laureate for the City of Los Angeles

**“Celebrating National Poetry Month”**

Celebrate the joy of poetry with our city’s acclaimed Poet Laureate. What a treat!

**MAY 7, 2022**

Anat Golan-Wenick

**“Turn Your Novel Into A Screen Play”**

Want to see your novel come to life on the big or little screen? Learn how, now!

**JUNE 4, 2022**

Pamela Samuels Young

**“Write Your Next Page Turner”**

Whether you write mysteries, romance, or nonfiction, learn the tips and tricks best-selling authors use to keep readers turning pages.

*Programs are subject to change.*



## California Halloween

Winds buffet and sweep  
Trash dances with brown leaves  
Frantic tree limbs sway  
A spark and then  
Destruction

On arid hills  
Flames relentlessly march  
Consume and lay bare  
Twisted metal, treasures and bone  
As earth is blackened by  
Fire

In protected enclaves  
Disguised youth dart  
Bags swinging and capes behind  
With mask-blinded sight  
Oblivious

Candles now extinguished  
Burnt pumpkin scent wafts  
Through empty streets  
While children guard their  
Bounty

Cardboard skeletons twist  
In howling gusts  
Smoke and ashes reign  
Sated sons and daughters  
Sleep

**Pat Avery**



## Like a Tolkien Ent

Here am I crammed into a tree  
I don't know what happened to me  
Right there I was, out on a walk  
With my iPhone: talkity-talk.  
And then next, very frightening  
I was be-treed like greased lightning  
All of a sudden, I was zapped.  
Now I'm wooden, maple, and trapped.  
It may have been an accident  
But I'm stuck like a Tolkien Ent  
If you pass by, please wave and smile  
I'm in here for a long, long while.

Michael Edelstein



**Original Tolkien Ent**



**Michael's Trapped Ent**

# Ninety Plus Six – A Blessing!

By Leslie Kaplan

**N**ow I know why people say “How Time Flies.” I can’t believe I will be celebrating my ninety-sixth birthday on September the seventeenth in the year of twenty one... 9/17/21! That’s close to a century ago. Oh my. My life —from being born the first American child of Russian Jewish immigrants in the Depression year of 1925, to living in this pandemic year of 2021 — has been quite a journey, to say the least.

There’s a line in an American song that says, “You’ve come a long way, baby.” I don’t know why but I always connect some popular song lyrics to episodes in my life. Even at this late date I will fall asleep at night with lyrics running through my head. I must have been born ... “WITH A SONG IN MY HEART.”

While my memory fails me in many areas, I haven’t forgotten the lyrics to songs I grew up listening to on the radio. I always won cartons of cigarettes by naming the weekly five top tunes on the radio “Hit Parade” contest. These Lucky Strikes prizes kept my mom and my Aunt Celie well supplied. They never had to buy cigarettes. No wonder I became a smoker at age fifteen! But when I got a little older and became a singer/performer. I had to quit to save my voice. I weaned off the nicotine by constantly keeping a licorice stick in my mouth. Maybe that was a weird way to give up smoking, but it worked for me!!

My point in recalling these old memories: I used to love to sing but then my voice went South with my youth. I used to love to dance but that too has left along with my balance. But so many fond mem-

ories linger on. The singing ... dancing ... and yes ... a lot of romancing.

I wouldn’t trade my memories and experiences for anything. It’s great to be Ninety Plus Six. A blessing.

**Editor’s Note:** Leslie Kaplan has been an active member of our branch for a couple of decades. She’s hosted a critique group for nearly as long and once served as our Speaker Chair. Below you’ll see a Halloween poem she submitted to this newsletter in 2011.



## My Goblin...My Ghost

By Leslie Kaplan

Everyday is like Halloween to me,  
I make up my face to disguise what people will see,  
I select what to wear to enhance my best assets,  
Then I primp as I pose to expose many facets.

I am two different people by day and by night,  
As the makeup comes off and the clothes that were tight,  
There's a ghost in my mirror... what a horror to see,  
Like the face of a goblin she is staring at me.

So who can I be... not a witch nor a saint,  
But the image is strange when I wash off my paint  
I'm stripped bare of my costume no longer the Queen,  
But tomorrow once more....it will be Halloween.



## **October**

**solitude  
motionless  
and alive**

**with barely perceptible pulse  
wind chimes  
in the distance**

**dried leaves drift away  
from lonely branches  
a flutter of sound  
muted in frosted dawns**

**loneliness  
without regret  
within a gray frame  
crystal reflections**

**memories  
awakened in fall  
energy  
diffused from dreams**

**October evening  
canopy of stars  
cool velvet night  
embroidered with music  
wind chimes  
in the distance**

**Lillian Rodich**



**Cache Creek Wilderness in California**

# CWC-SFV BRANCH INFORMATION

AT A FUTURE DATE, THE MPTF MEETINGS WILL RESUME AT THIS WOODLAND HILLS LOCATION



AND WE WILL GATHER ONCE MORE IN THE COMFORTABLE SABAN COMMUNITY ROOM



INSIDE THE SABAN CENTER FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS.

## CURRENT CWC-SFV CRITIQUE GROUPS

**Tuesday Poetry Critique Group**  
Meetings held once a month on the 2nd Tuesday from 10:30 AM until 1 PM. Poetry only.

**Tuesday Long Fiction Critique Group**  
This group meets Via Zoom on Tuesdays, once a month, from 1 to 4 PM. Focus is on long fiction.

**Wednesday Daytime Critique Group**  
Meetings held 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month from 11:30 to 3 PM. Long and short fiction, memoirs and poetry.

**Friday Daytime Critique Group**  
Meetings held on the 2nd and 4th Friday of the month from 1 to 4 PM. All genres except poetry.

**Saturday Critique Group**  
Meetings held 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month from 10 AM to 1 PM. Long and short fiction, memoirs and poetry.

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